

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

September 11, 2008

1:30 p.m., MST

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Hearing Room 1 of the Senate Building, 1700 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. MST.

1. Call to Order

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman

Ms. Margaret Dugan

Ms. Johanna Haver

Ms. Eileen Klein

Ms. Karen Merritt

Ms. Anna Rosas

Absent:

Dr. John Baracy

Mr. Jim DiCello

Dr. Eugene Garcia

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

2. Approval of June 12, 2008 and July 10, 2008 minutes of Task Force meeting

Chairman Maguire noted that these two sets of minutes had been forwarded to the Task Force members for their review. He asked if there were any question or comment. None being offered, Ms. Dugan moved for their acceptance; Anna Rosas seconded.

- *Moved and accepted.*

3. Preliminary review of the proposed Alternate Models received prior to July 28, 2008-Litchfield Elementary School District.

Chairman Maguire stated that one district with an alternate proposed model was scheduled to present to the Task Force, Litchfield Elementary School District (LESD). He noted that (LESD) staff were present and asked if they were aware of the ground rules. He asked them to present and introduce themselves. The first presenter was Brian Owin, Director of Research, Evaluation & Accountability & Title III/Federal Programs for LESD.

Mr. Owin noted that he hoped that the Task Force members had read the proposal, but he wished to highlight three things that LESD was asking for as departures from the Task Force models, to be considered. When the four-hour ELD model concept was first introduced, Mr. Owin stated that he did extensive research, through years of data and thousands of data points and ultimately agreed with the model concept except for reading:

- LESD, instead of grouping by proficiency of Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA), would group by the reading ability of both non-ELL and ELL. Mr. Owin noted that reading ability asked the Task Force consider this ability grouping of non-ELLs and ELLs reading at about the same level to be grouped together for 60 minutes of reading instruction only
- Mr. Owin then noted that for this year, space limitations, construction delays and funding dictate that their district is “busting at the seams” and asks that the Task Force consider if LESD can group for four hours, English Language Development, outside the mainstream classroom and group new ELL students that are Basic, Pre-Emergent and Emergent, with non-ELL students who test on the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) and reach the scoring level of Falls Far Below and/or Approaching
- Pullout setting/small groups (for all other ELL students) outside the mainstream setting

Chairman Maguire asked if they pull out Pre-Emergent and Emergent students and group them with low-performing non-ELLs. Mr. Owin stated that 48% of their new students are Intermediate and don’t need intensive listening and speaking instruction. Mr. Owin said that students who score “Falls Far Below” or “Approaching” on AIMS and Pre-Emergent, Emergent and low Basic (and in some cases high-Basic) are grouped together. Ms. Karen Merritt asked what the total number of ELL students in the district was. Mr. Owin stated that LESD has decreased the number of ELL students in the District due to high reclassification rates, and although he does not have all of the new assessment information in yet, there are about 800 ELL students. Ms. Merritt asked if LESD has any schools that have less than 20 students, in a 3-grade-level band? Mr. Owin stated that they do have low ELL numbers at some schools, but not within a 3 grade level band. Ms. Merritt asked if they are a “Reading First” district, with Mr. Owin responding that LESD is not a Reading First School. Ms. Johanna Haver asked if LESD used a particular reading program. Mr. Owin stated that they use the “Wilson” reading program at the elementary level and they are looking at Read 180 for the middle schools. Ms. Haver asked Mr. Owin to tell her about the Wilson reading program. Mr. Owin stated that he is not very familiar with the program in terms of curriculum and instruction and asked Assistant Superintendent Ms. Heather Cruz to speak on behalf of that topic. Ms. Cruz noted that this program is basically for the lower-ended student, especially for kindergartners; it works on phonemic awareness, and is also highly kinesthetic. Ms. Johanna Haver asked if this program is available through the second grade and Ms. Cruz stated that Wilson is available through the middle school level. Students receive Wilson, if they are not functioning well within the foundations realm. Ms. Haver wanted to know if the students are grouped together in reading groups and tested frequently? Ms. Cruz stated yes, and students are progress monitored throughout time with DIBELS.

Ms. Haver asked if they have been using this program for awhile and what its success rate was. Ms. Cruz stated that the LESD has been using this program for awhile and its success rate is very good. Ms. Haver asked for the LESD reclassification rate, with Mr. Owin stated that last year, they were at 28%.

4. Review, discussion and possible action on proposed Alternate Models

Chairman Maguire noted that Sunnyside Unified School District Alternate Model presentation is being held until the October, 2008, Task Force meeting. He then stated that the Task Force would be hearing from Santa Cruz Unified School District (SCUSD), and asked them to present. Superintendent **Daniel Fontes** approached the podium and introduced the other SCUSD staff in attendance: **Rodney Rich**/Assistant Superintendent, **Denise Blake**/Director for Instructional Support, **Gail Rich**/Principal-San Cayetano Elementary School, **Sandra C. Figueroa**/Principal-Pena Blanca Elementary School, and **Stephen Schadler**/Principal-Mountain View Elementary School. Mr. Fontes noted that they had brought a slide presentation. Superintendent Fontes stated that SCUSD has always done what the state has asked. In their program, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is embedded in their SEI program. He stated that they have a 30% reclassification rate, and that their model is a very good model; he asked for the Task Force to approve their model. At this point, Mr. Rodney Rich and Ms. Denise Blake presented the slides. Ms. Blake, Ms. Rich and Mr. Schadler noted these points:

- Students with the same degree of fluency are grouped together
- There is a mix of Ells and non-Ells
- Content-based
- Anchored in the standards
- The objective is anchored in the lesson/it is posted and used
- Reading, vocabulary, with the same group of children
- Based on DIBELs
- Students work on the computer/work with Rosetta Stone
- Teachers work with students who speak fluently and those who are ELLs

Mr. Schadler noted they expanded the 30-minute tutorial to a two-hour block, while the remaining part of the day is the same. Ms. Dugan noted that this was not about space but more about the model or the philosophical differences. Ms. Blake stated that the data they have, with the model that is currently in place, is showing that the reclassification rates that is the goal for Santa Cruz Unified School District and they would like to continue to do that. Ms. Dugan asked what the reclassification rate was. Ms. Blake noted that the '06-'07 reclassification rate was 38%, and the '07-'08 is 30%. Ms. Dugan asked "why is 38% the ultimate?" Ms. Blake responded that this is early implementation. Ms. Klein asked what their definition of homogeneous is. Ms. Blake responded with: "like reading level groups, like language groups, within a mainstream setting.

Chairman Maguire, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Haver and Ms. Blake discussed how the SCUSD is currently grouping/planning to group students. Ms. Haver asked if the student population was transient, Superintendent Fontes noted that it was very stable.

Chairman Maguire commented that he has concerns about the English proficiency standards being implemented in the time allocated; “it is difficult to imagine how twelve minutes communicates effectively to varying degrees of proficiency. Time allocated on pre-emergent oral conversation is different than heterogeneous mixing.” He was impressed by the data and found it very clear. He stated the following:

- The time allocation had to be reconciled,
- The law governs the placement of ELL students; we can’t change the law

There ensued a long discussion on these points, the SCUSD planning, the use of content, the Phoenix UHSD model in relation to SCUSD, and the belief in the district that there is value in mixing. Chairman Maguire asked Arizona Department of Education Associate Superintendent for Accountability John Stollar if he has looked at the SCUSD data. Mr. Stollar noted that there had been extensive discussions of the SCUSD proposal, and that it had been noted to the district that a “model that is not approvable is not effective programming.” He also noted that since this is already mid-September of the ‘08-’09 school year, that he would suggest to the task force that, “if you approve them, do so with the proviso of re-structuring...if this is not approvable, then ADE/OELAS would continue to work with them.”

Chairman Maguire noted that “we are bound by law”. While the SCUSD data was very impressive, the law is designed specifically and prescriptively. He noted that the strongest possibility is that of having SCUSD continue working with ADE/OELAS. Ms. Dugan agreed with Chairman Maguire, moved that SCUSD “continue to dialogue with ADE/OELAS, and continue working on becoming closer to the law” to achieve compliance. Ms. Rosas seconded the motion: Adopted.

5. Update on Arizona Department of Education Activities Regarding Implementation of the Structured English Immersion (SEI) Models

Chairman Maguire noted that Alternate Model submissions have been withdrawn because of the work of John Stollar and his staff, and called Mr. Stollar to testify on the above item.

Mr. Stollar thanked the Chairman for his comments. He noted that he and two OELAS directors visited TUSD yesterday and were all quite encouraged at their progress in ELD. After brief remarks about TUSD, he then introduced the new OELAS director, Marlene Johnston, who provided an update on the ELL program monitoring process and how it has been revised and expanded in scope. Ms. Johnston noted that OELAS has designed and developed a system that is consistent, standardized and (in addition to its original mission of federal and state compliance) will provide programmatic analysis on the implementation of the SEI Models. Ms. Johnston provided an extensive outline of the process, the OELAS internal monitor training, and the 2008 monitor notebook.

Chairman Maguire then asked a question on the “turn-around time” for the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA). Mr. Stollar noted that all LEAs have been given a self-scoring procedure to place students sooner, while waiting for the formal scores from Pearson. LEAs can place students in the ELL program immediately for instructional purposes. The LEAs will officially enroll the student, in the Student Accountability and Information System (SAIS) after receipt from Pearson. Currently, there is a 10-day “turn-around”; with a procedure in place to identify what is the cause and who is accountable. ADE announced that Pearson data will be sent to ADE directly from Pearson. ADE will have a document trail to ensure any changes are initiated and authorized by the LEAs. Ms. Merritt noted that SAIS needs to be open when the LEAs start school operations; on a more timely basis.

6. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities

Chairman Maguire noted that the next meeting will take place on October 9, 2008.

7. Call to the Public

There being no comments for the public, Ms. Klein moved for the meeting to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dugan. Chairman Maguire adjourned the meeting at 4:06 pm.

Arizona ELL Task Force

Alan Maguire, Chairman